UP-111

(RAY)

PETROS, TENN. (UPI) -- STAFF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE ASSASSINATIONS COMMITTEE VISITED A TENNESSEE PRISON TUESDAY TO QUESTION JAMES EARL RAY ABOUT THE 1968 ASSASSINATION OF CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

RAY'S LATEST ATTORNEY, JACK KERSHAW OF NASHVILLE, SAID RAY WOULD TELL THE GROUP ALL HE KNOWS ABOUT THE ASSASSINATION.

"HE WILL TELL THE COMPLETE STORY TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE," SAID KERSHAW.

THE ATTORNEY SAID HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE HAVING TO INSTRUCT RAY NOT TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS DURING THE INTERVIEW.

RICHARD SPRAGUE, CHIEF COUNSEL FOR THE COMMITTEE, AND FOUR OTHER STAFF MEMBERS DROVE UP TO THE GATES OF BRUSHY MOUNTAIN STATE PRISON AT 3 P.M. EST AND WERE TAKEN BEHIND THE WALLS TO MEET WITH RAY.

RAY IS SERVING A 99-YEAR PRISON TERM FOR THE 1968 SNIPER SLAYING OF KING.

THE INTERVIEW WITH RAY WAS TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE TUESDAY MORNING BUT WAS DELAYED AFTER BAD WEATHER FORCED COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBERS TO SWITCH FROM A PRIVATE TO A COMMERCIAL PLANE FOR THEIR FLIGHT FROM WASHINGTON.

KERSHAW DISCOUNTED A RECENT REPORT THAT RAY'S YOUNGER BROTHER, JERRY, WAS ACTUALLY THE MYSTERIOUS "RAOUL" WHOM RAY HAS BLAMED FOR THE KING MURDER.

"NO. THAT IS NOT TRUE," KERSHAW SAID. BUT HE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW THE IDENTIFY OF "RAOUL."

"I WISH I DID. WE HAVE TWO OR THREE LEADS WE ARE CHECKING OUT. WE ARE LOOKING FOR HIM IN FLORIDA, ALABAMA, KENTUCKY AND CANADA," KERSHAW SAID.

DAVID LIFTON AND JEFF COHEN CLAIM IN AN ARTICLE IN THE APRIL EDITION OF NEW TIMES MAGAZINE THAT IN HIS TESTIMONY RAY SUBSTITUTED A NON-EXISTENT "RADUL" FOR HIS BROTHER, JERRY.

KERSHAW SAID RAY WOULD TELL INVESTIGATORS THAT HE HAD NO IDEA KING WAS TO BE ASSASSINATED AND THAT RAY WAS FIXING A FLAT TIRE WHEN THE SHOT WHICH KILLED KING WAS FIRED FROM A RUN-DOWN BOARDING HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE MOTEL.

KERSHAW SAID THE KEY TO THE INVESTIGATION WAS LEARNING THE IDENTITY OF "RADUL" AND WHO "RADUL" WORKED FOR.

THE ATTORNEY SAID IF RAY DOES TESTIFY BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATORS IT MUST BE IN AN OPEN HEARING.

"I INSIST THAT HE APPEAR IN AN OPEN HEARING. I DOUBT IF THE COMMISSION WOULD COME HERE, BUT UNDER PROPER GUARD HE MIGHT GO TO WASHINGTON," KERSHAW SAID.

ASKED IF RAY WOULD SUBMIT TO A POLYGRAPH TEST, KERSHAW SAID, "WE HAVE CONSIDERED THAT AND WE HAVE DISCUSSED THAT AND I'LL HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE ON THAT LATER.

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